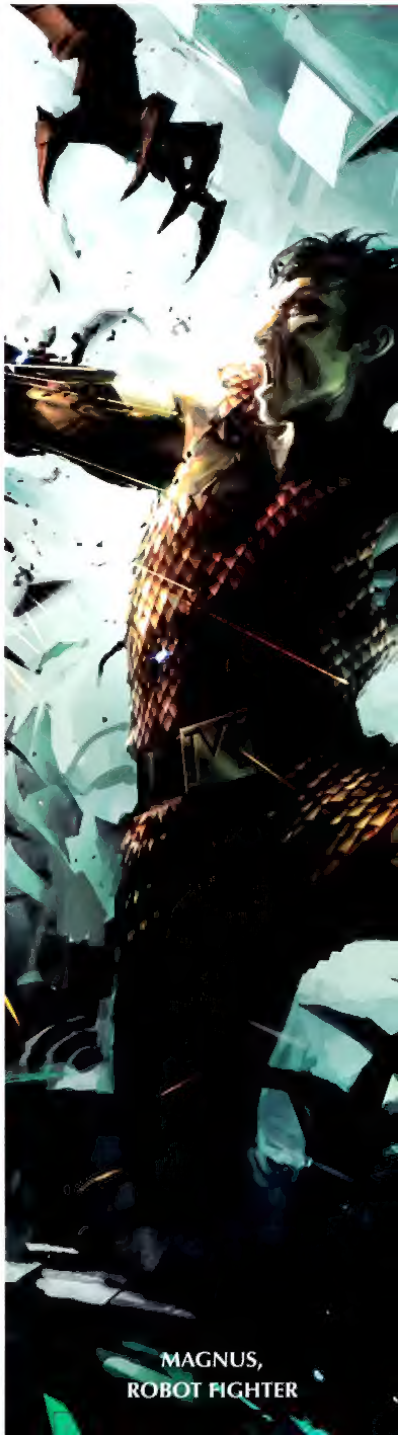
GEMSTONE PUBLISHING

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY™ 2011

The OVERSTREET® GUIDE TO COLLECTING COMICS



The OVERSTREET® GUIDE TO COLLECTING COMICS

WRITTEN BY J.C. VAUGHN

WITH BAILEY BALL, THE OVERSTREET ADVISORS, RON MARZ (WITCHBLADE), JOE AHEARN, ED CATTO AND FABIAN NICIEZA (CAPTAIN ACTION)

COMIC SECTIONS ILLUSTRATED BY GENE GONZALES
WITH MARC SILVERSTRI (WITCHBLADE)
AND MARK SPARACIO WITH MIKE LILLY (CAPTAIN ACTION)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL A. SOLOF

COVER IMAGES BY RAYMOND SWANLAND AND MICHAEL KOMARCK

EDITED & DESIGNED BY MARK HUESMAN

EDITING ASSISTS BY MIKE WILBUR

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Stephen A. Geppi
President & Chief Executive Officer

Robert M. Overstreet
Publisher

J.C. Vaughn
Associate Publisher & Executive Editor

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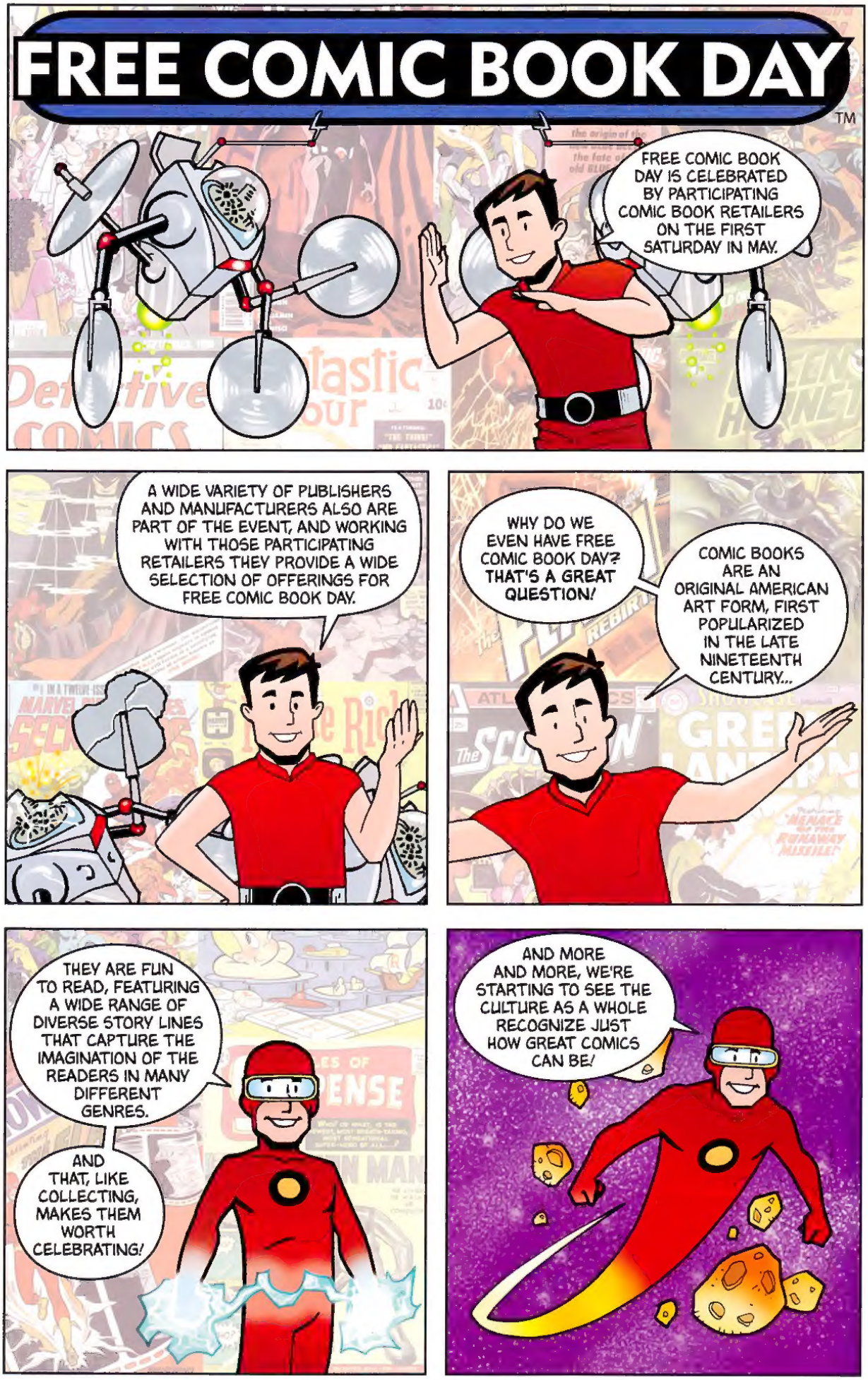
A NEW SPIDER-MAN GOT CAST. A THIRD NEW BATMAN MOVIE IS IN THE WORKS. THOR AND GREEN LANTERN ARE NOW FEATURE FILM CHARACTERS...
AND IT'S NOT JUST SUPERHEROES THAT PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT. THE WALKING DEAD WAS TURNED INTO A HIT TV SERIES, AS WAS HUMAN TARGET.
AND ARCHIE GOT MARRIED. TWICE.
BUT THAT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG! 2010 WAS A PRETTY BIG DEAL IN COMICS, AND 2011 HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF ANOTHER EVENTFUL YEAR.

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY IS A GREAT TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD OF COMICS.
IT'S ABOUT CELEBRATING EVERYTHING RELATED TO COMIC BOOKS AND COMIC CHARACTERS.

IT'S ALSO A GREAT TIME TO THINK ABOUT COLLECTING!

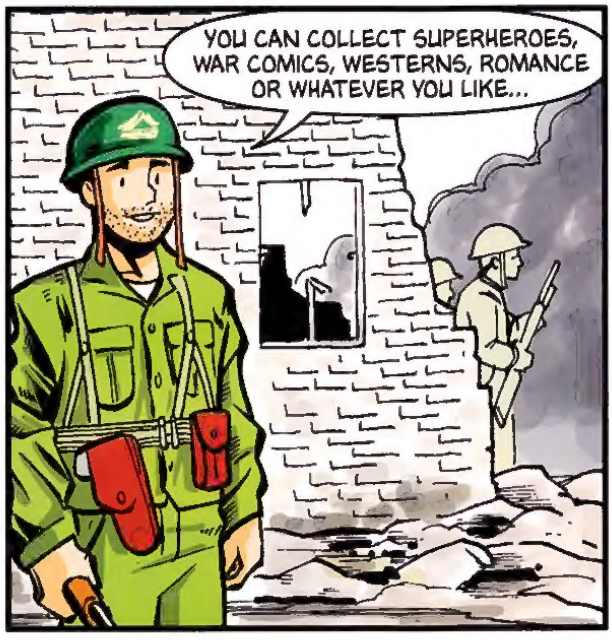

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY
TM
FREE COMIC BOOK DAY IS CELEBRATED BY PARTICIPATING COMIC BOOK RETAILERS ON THE FIRST SATURDAY IN MAY.
A WIDE VARIETY OF PUBLISHERS AND MANUFACTURERS ALSO ARE PART OF THE EVENT, AND WORKING WITH THOSE PARTICIPATING RETAILERS THEY PROVIDE A WIDE SELECTION OF OFFERINGS FOR FREE COMIC BOOK DAY.
WHY DO WE EVEN HAVE FREE COMIC BOOK DAY? THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION!
COMIC BOOKS ARE AN ORIGINAL AMERICAN ART FORM, FIRST POPULARIZED IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY...
THEY ARE FUN TO READ, FEATURING A WIDE RANGE OF DIVERSE STORY LINES THAT CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION OF THE READERS IN MANY DIFFERENT GENRES.
AND THAT, LIKE COLLECTING, MAKES THEM WORTH CELEBRATING!
AND MORE AND MORE, WE'RE STARTING TO SEE THE CULTURE AS A WHOLE RECOGNIZE JUST HOW GREAT COMICS CAN BE!

WITH MOVIES LIKE THE *IRON MAN* SERIES, THE *SPIDER-MAN* SERIES, THE *X-MEN* SERIES, THE *BATMAN* SERIES, *300*, *ROAD TO PERDITION*, *GHOST WORLD*, *WATCHMEN* AND SO MANY OTHERS...
MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER ARE GETTING TO KNOW COMIC CHARACTERS.
IN FACT, THE *DARK KNIGHT* MADE MORE THAN $1 BILLION AT THE BOX OFFICE ALONE.
AND OF COURSE THERE ARE TV SHOWS, VIDEO GAMES, MOTION COMICS AND MORE...
ALL OF THE GREAT STUFF IN OTHER MEDIA LEADS US BACK TO THE PLACE IN WHICH THESE GREAT STORIES WERE CREATED...
COMICS!
ACTION COMICS
THROW ME THE *ACTION COMICS* #1 AND I'LL THROW YOU THE WHIP!
WHETHER YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT OR YOU'VE BEEN COLLECTING FOR A LONG TIME, THERE'S ALWAYS A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT COMICS.
ACTION COMICS
10¢

ONE OF THE COOL THINGS ABOUT COMIC BOOKS IS THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF NEW ONES TO DISCOVER...
AND THERE ARE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENT BACK ISSUES, TOO!
BACK ISSUE COMICS RANGE FROM LESS THAN COVER PRICE TO $1,500,000.
A COMIC BOOK FOR $1.5 MILLION? HARD TO BELIEVE, HUH?
THE FIRST COMIC TO HIT $1 MILLION WAS ACTION COMICS #1, THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF SUPERMAN.
THE SECOND, JUST A FEW DAYS LATER, WAS DETECTIVE COMICS #27, THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF BATMAN.
ANOTHER ACTION #1 SOLD FOR $1.5 MILLION JUST A SHORT WHILE AFTER THAT.
MANY OTHERS HAVE SOLD FOR RECORD PRICES IN THE LAST YEAR OR SO, EVEN WITH THE TOUGH ECONOMY NATIONALLY.
THE GRADE AND SCARCITY OF THE ISSUES HAVE A LOT TO DO WITH THAT. WE'LL GET INTO THAT IN JUST A BIT...

THE BEST PART IS THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO COLLECT.

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO FOLLOW INDIVIDUAL PUBLISHERS, WRITERS, ARTISTS, CHARACTERS...


YOU CAN COLLECT SUPERHEROES, WAR COMICS, WESTERNS, ROMANCE OR WHATEVER YOU LIKE...

YOU CAN CHOOSE #1 ISSUES, FIRST APPEARANCES, CROSSOVERS, OR MANY OTHER VARIATIONS.

THE BEST THING TO COLLECT IS WHAT YOU LIKE, NOT WHAT SOMEONE ELSE LIKES.

WHETHER IT'S SPIDER-MAN OR EVERY COMIC THAT CAME OUT THE MONTH YOU WERE BORN, IT'S BEST TO DO IT WITH A PLAN.

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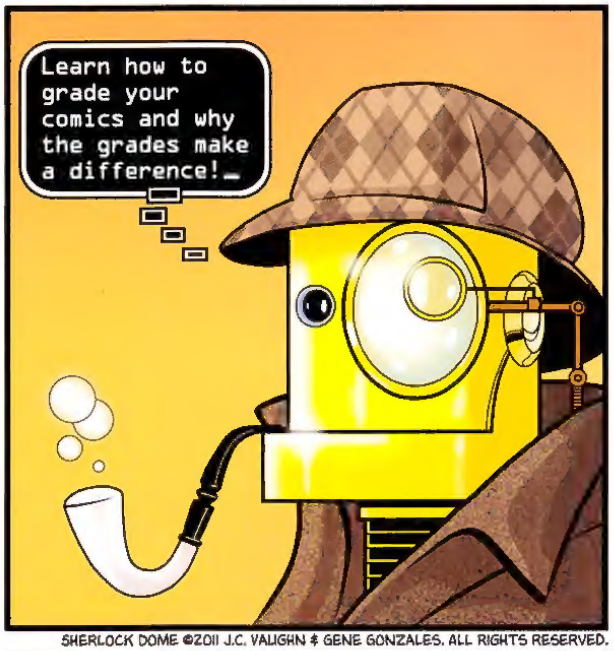

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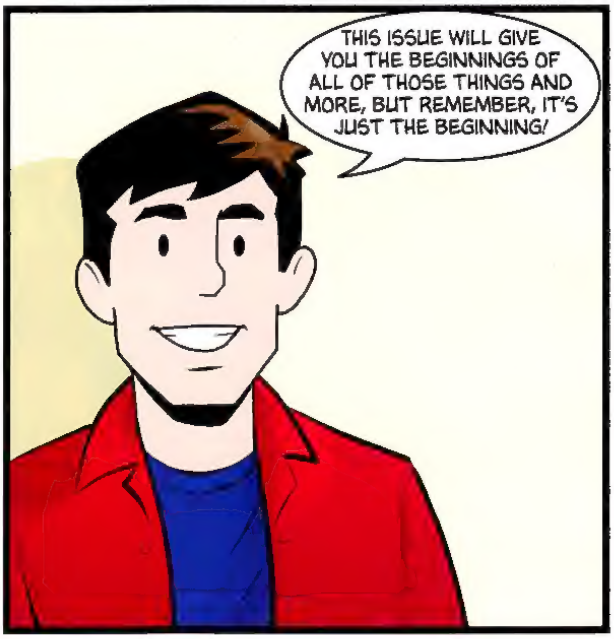

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PRICES: 1970 vs. TODAY

When the first edition of *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* was released in 1970, some collectors and dealers actually complained the prices listed in the book were too high!

Action Comics #1

First appearance of Superman
1970 Mint Price: $300
2010 NM– Price: $1,200,000

Detective Comics #27

First appearance of Batman
1970 Mint Price: $275
2010 NM– Price: $1,050,000

Marvel Comics #1

First Sub-Mariner and Human Torch
1970 Mint Price: $250
2010 NM– Price: $450,000

Whiz Comics #1 (#2)

First appearance of Captain Marvel
1970 Mint Price: $235
2010 NM– Price: $95,000

Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #1

Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse reprints
1970 Mint Price: $115
2010 NM– Price: $40,000

All Star Comics #3

First Justice Society of America
1970 Mint Price: $135
2010 NM– Price: $85,000

Captain America Comics #1

First appearance of Captain America
1970 Mint Price: $150
2010 NM– Price: $215,000

Pep Comics #22

First appearance of Archie
1970 Mint Price: $10
2010 NM– Price: $50,000

Showcase #4

First appearance of Silver Age Flash
1970 Mint Price: $12
2010 NM– Price: $54,000

Showcase #22

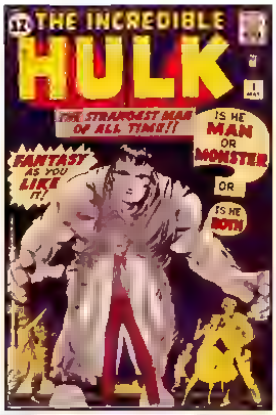
First Silver Age Green Lantern
1970 Mint Price: $6
2010 NM– Price: $12,500

Brave and the Bold #28

First Justice League of America
1970 Mint Price: $5
2010 NM– Price: $16,000

Fantastic Four #1

First appearance of the Fantastic Four
1970 Mint Price: $12
2010 NM– Price: $70,000

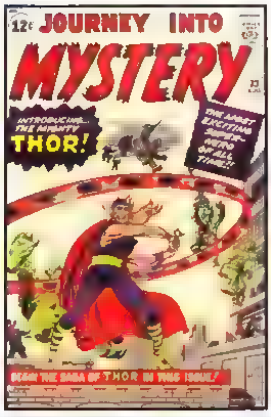


Incredible Hulk #1

First appearance of the Hulk
1970 Mint Price: $14
2010 NM– Price: $65,000

Amazing Fantasy #15

First appearance of Spider-Man
1970 Mint Price: $16
2010 NM– Price: $100,000



Journey Into Mystery #83

First appearance of Thor
1970 Mint Price: $10
2010 NM– Price: $24,000

Tales of Suspense #39

First appearance of Iron Man
1970 Mint Price: $6
2010 NM– Price: $20,000

The Avengers #1

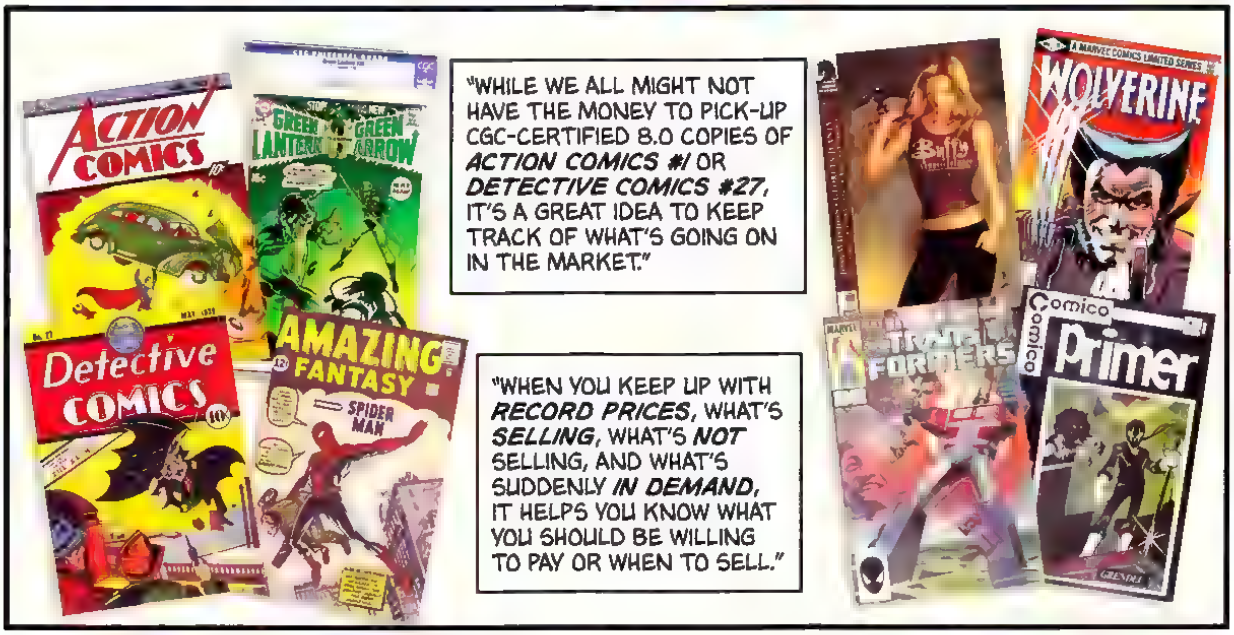
First appearance of the Avengers
1970 Mint Price: $6
2010 NM– Price: $12,500

X-Men #1

First appearance of the X-Men
1970 Mint Price: $6
2010 NM– Price: $26,000

For the latest prices on these comics – and about 300,000 other issues – check out *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #41, on sale Wednesday, July 20, 2011.

the OVERSTREET COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE
ROBERT M. OVERSTREET
WHILE I REALLY LIKE *READING* THE COMIC BOOKS IN MY COLLECTION, THERE'S A LOT OF FUN IN ACTUALLY PUTTING A COLLECTION TOGETHER!


ACTION COMICS
GREEN LANTERN
GREEN ARROW
AMAZING FANTASY
SPIDER MAN
Detective COMICS
"WHILE WE ALL MIGHT NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO PICK-UP CGC-CERTIFIED 8.0 COPIES OF *ACTION COMICS #1* OR *DETECTIVE COMICS #27*, IT'S A GREAT IDEA TO KEEP TRACK OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE MARKET."
"WHEN YOU KEEP UP WITH *RECORD PRICES*, WHAT'S *SELLING*, WHAT'S *NOT* SELLING, AND WHAT'S SUDDENLY *IN DEMAND*, IT HELPS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD BE WILLING TO PAY OR WHEN TO SELL."
WOLVERINE
TRANSFORMERS
Primer

BUYING AND *SELLING BACK ISSUES* CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST INTIMIDATING PARTS OF COLLECTING COMIC BOOKS, BUT IF YOU'RE PREPARED IT'S NOT REALLY SCARY AT ALL.

ON THE NEXT PAGE, WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE BASICS. BUT REMEMBER, THERE'S *NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE!*

With record prices paid for *Action Comics* #1, *Detective Comics* #27, *Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Incredible Hulk* #1, and many other comics, it's a very interesting time to sell your comics. "Interesting," though, doesn't automatically mean "great."

It seems pretty basic, but you should only patronize dealers who treat you well. Whether you're purchasing a single new issue or setting a record price for a "Holy Grail" back issue, any customer deserves to be treated with respect, as do the dealers with whom you do business.

When it comes to spending serious amounts of money on a comic, you should never deal with a dealer without fully checking their references. The more serious the money, the more patient you should be in getting additional verification, such as checking with The Better Business Bureau. While it is not in and of itself any kind of guaranty, advertisers and advisors in *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* are more likely to have an established reputation.

If you are looking to sell, potential buyers who are dealers will be most concerned with the retail value of your entire collection. Based on demand at that time, which in turn depends on the dealer's customer base, some issues may sell for prices above *Guide*, while others retail below *Guide* prices. More recent issues may only be worth a percentage of cover price. Take into account how the collection breaks down into fast-, moderate-, and slow-moving issues. To expect someone to pay full retail for comics that usually sell at considerably lower prices is unrealistic.

Regardless, you should learn as much as you can about the market so that you can formulate an informed opinion as to what percentage of *Guide* price is acceptable to you. It's also simply good business to get competing offers.

Some buyers may want to purchase only certain key or high grade issues from your collection. While you may be paid a high percentage of retail for their selections, you will find that "cherry-picked" collections are much more difficult to sell, since all of the most desired books will be sold by the time the second or third potential buyer examines your collection.

Auction houses offer another outlet for your comics. For the rarest, high-grade, vintage comics, some auction companies will even offer you cash advances against the expected sales of your comics. Most of the established auction houses will gladly discuss their track records and how they perceive current market conditions.

Another venue, of course, is eBay, which bypasses the auction house structure. It is not exclusively the domain of bargain hunters, but many eBay shoppers expect a discount on the price they would pay dealers or fellow collectors in person.

If you are listing your comics for a prospective buyer, an auction house, an eBay listing or even your insurance company, don't forget how important it is to understand the condition of your comics. Learning how to grade with the top graders in the business can take years, but getting a good understanding of the process doesn't take that long at all.

You should think along the same lines when you are going to purchase collectible comics. Learn what the give and take in the market is about, and develop your understanding of how important grades are to pricing.

Most of us can't afford to go out and buy a 9.6 copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 on a whim, but low grade copies are still easily within reach of many collectors.

Whether buying or selling, the key is to get informed.

COMIC BOOK AGES

When we use terms like "Golden Age" or "Silver Age" or any other age to describe a period of comic book history, we're using a form of verbal shorthand to quickly convey our meaning, but what is it we're really saying?

More than 90 years before *New Fun Comics* #1 hit the stands, *The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck* presented a story in sequential comic form. Someone made the decision to publish it and influenced the next generation of cartoonists.

If Vin Sullivan and his contemporaries hadn't been looking to try something different, would *Action Comics* #1 ever have happened? If Julie Schwartz hadn't been interested in reviving the superheroes, would *Showcase* #4 have witnessed the reinterpretation of the Flash? If Stan Lee hadn't stepped away from the day-to-day operations at Marvel, would Gwen Stacy have died? If the limited series format hadn't proved successful, how would *Crisis on Infinite Earths* have been handled?

It's simple: the comics and other significant milestones most often came about because of editorial or publishing decisions that were made several months before. It is actually these decisions we are marking when we note the defining characteristics of a comic book age.

AGE	YEARS
Pioneer	1500s-1828
Victorian	1828-1883
Platinum	1883-1938
Golden	1938-1945
Atom	1946-1956
Silver	1956-1970
Bronze	1970-1984
Copper	1984-1992
Modern	1992-Present

PEDIGREES

What are comic book pedigrees? Why are they important?

According to the forthcoming book *The Guide To Comic Book Pedigrees*, "A pedigreed collection must have been accumulated by one individual during the time the comics were released on the newsstand. This is a critical factor because a pedigree's appeal comes from their homogenous quality and singular genesis. The books have aged together in the same environment, creating a uniform 'feel' that does not exist for comics in a collection with diverse origins."

As the book's website points out, there are three other commonly accepted stipulations for what makes a collection a pedigree collection:

- A pedigreed collection must primarily consist of high quality comic books.
- A pedigreed collection must contain a substantial number of key or rare issues, or represent a significant portion of a particular genre, company, period, or classic title/character.
- Comics Guaranty, LLC (CGC) and the collecting community must continue to recognize the pedigree name of a collection past the point of initial sale.

The first widely recognized comic book pedigree was (and is) the Edgar Church collection, which is also known as the Mile High collection, which was unveiled in the 1970s. Since it first gained notoriety, others have surfaced including the following:

- Allentown
- Aurora
- Bethlehem
- Big Apple
- Boston
- Bowling Green
- Carson City
- Chicago
- Circle 8
- Cosmic Aeroplane
- Crowley
- Curator
- Davis Crippen ("D")
- Denver
- Don & Maggie Thompson
- Edgar Church (Mile High)
- Gaines File
- Green River
- Hawkeye
- Kansas City
- Lamont Larson
- Lost Valley
- Massachusetts
- Mohawk Valley
- Northford
- Northland
- Nova Scotia
- Ohio
- Okajima
- Pacific Coast
- Palo Alto
- Pennsylvania
- Recil Macon
- River City
- Rockford
- Salida
- Spokane
- Tom Reilly (San Francisco)
- Twilight
- Vancouver
- Western Penn
- White Mountain
- Windy City
- Winnipeg

GRADING

ONE OF THE *MOST IMPORTANT* FACTORS IN DETERMINING A COMIC'S VALUE IS THE *GRADE* IT RECEIVES.

JUST FOR INSTANCE, A *9.8* COPY OF *GREEN LANTERN* #76 SOLD FOR $37,343.75 LAST YEAR. A *2.0* COPY OF THAT SAME ISSUE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE $100.

SO, HEY, I'M NOT TRYING TO TELL YOU WHAT TO DO, BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO LEARN A BIT ABOUT GRADING?

PAINKILLER JANE © 2011 QUESADA & PALMIOTTI
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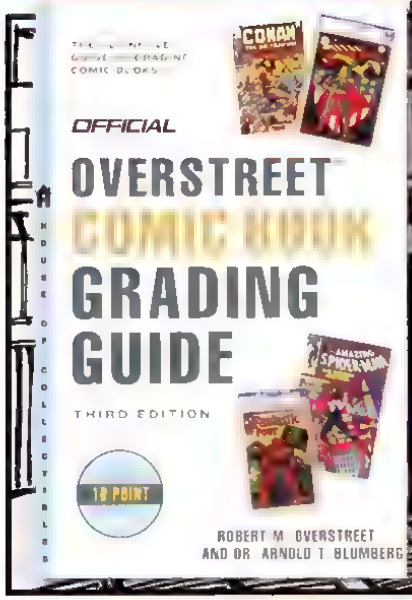

It's a good practice to develop relationships with dealers and other collectors who prove themselves trustworthy.

MANY PEOPLE HAVE STARTED USING INDEPENDENT, THIRD-PARTY GRADING SERVICES, SUCH AS CGC.

HEY, SOMEONE TOOK A BITE OUT OF THIS COMIC!

OKAY, THE BASICS OF GRADING ARE PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD. THE TOP OF THE SCALE IS *10.0* AND THE BOTTOM IS *0.5*.

IF YOU'RE *NEW* AT THIS, DON'T EXPECT TO BE AS GOOD AS A VETERAN COLLECTOR OR DEALER RIGHT AWAY. YOU'LL GET BETTER AT IT QUICKLY, AND IT'S SOMETHING *EVERY COLLECTOR* SHOULD LEARN.

WHEN YOU'RE READY, TURN THE PAGE AND YOU'LL FIND THE DEFINITIONS OF EACH GRADE.

GRADING DEFINITIONS

10.0 GEM MINT (GM): This is an exceptional example of a given book - the best ever seen. The slightest bindery defects and/or printing flaws may be seen only upon very close inspection. The overall look is "as if it has never been handled or released for purchase." Only the slightest bindery or printing defects are allowed, and these would be imperceptible on first viewing. No bindery tears. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with high reflectivity. Well centered and firmly secured to interior pages. Corners are cut square and sharp. No creases. No dates or stamped markings allowed. No soiling, staining or other discoloration. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples must be original, centered and clean with no rust. No staple tears or stress lines. Paper is white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. No interior autographs or owner signatures. Centerfold is firmly secure. No interior tears.

9.9 MINT (MT): Near perfect in every way. Only subtle bindery or printing defects are allowed. No bindery tears. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with high reflectivity. Generally well centered and firmly secured to interior pages. Corners are cut square and sharp. No creases. Small, inconspicuous, lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable as long as they are in an unobtrusive location. No soiling, staining or other discoloration. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples must be original, generally centered and clean with no rust. No staple tears or stress lines. Paper is white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is firmly secure. No interior tears.

9.8 NEAR MINT/MINT (NM/MT): Nearly perfect in every way with only minor imperfections that keep it from the next higher grade. Only subtle bindery or printing defects are allowed. No bindery tears. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with high reflectivity. Generally well centered and firmly secured to interior pages. Corners are cut square and sharp. No creases. Small, inconspicuous, lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable as long as they are in an unobtrusive location. No soiling, staining or other discoloration. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples must be original, generally centered and clean with no rust. No staple tears or stress lines. Paper is off-white to white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is firmly secure. Only the slightest interior tears are allowed.

9.6 NEAR MINT+ (NM+): Nearly perfect with a minor additional virtue or virtues that raise it from Near Mint. The overall look is "as if it was just purchased and read once or twice." Only subtle bindery or printing defects are allowed. No bindery tears are allowed, although on Golden Age books bindery tears of up to 1/8" have been noted. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with high reflectivity. Well centered and firmly secured to interior pages. One corner may be almost imperceptibly blunted, but still almost sharp and cut square. Almost imperceptible indentations are permissible, but no creases, bends, or color break. Small, inconspicuous, lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable as long as they are in an unobtrusive location. No soiling, staining or other discoloration. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples must be original, generally centered, with only the slightest discoloration. No staple tears, stress lines, or rust migration. Paper is off-white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is firmly secure. Only the slightest interior tears are allowed.

9.4 NEAR MINT (NM): Nearly perfect with only minor imperfections that keep it from the next higher grade. The overall look is "as if it was just purchased and read once or twice." Subtle bindery defects are allowed. Bindery tears must be less than 1/16' on Silver Age and later books, although on Golden Age books bindery tears of up to 1/4" have been noted. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with high reflectivity. Generally well centered and secured to interior pages. Corners are cut square and sharp with ever-so-slight blunting permitted. A 1/16" bend is permitted with no color break. No creases. Small, inconspicuous, lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable as long as they are in an unobtrusive location. No soiling, staining or other discoloration apart from slight foxing. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples are generally centered; may have slight discoloration. No staple tears are allowed; almost no stress lines. No rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is cream to off-white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is secure. Slight interior tears are allowed.

9.2 NEAR MINT– (NM–): Nearly perfect with only a minor additional defect or defects that keep it from Near Mint. A limited number of minor bindery defects are allowed. Cover is flat with no surface wear. Inks are bright with only the slightest dimming of reflectivity. Generally well centered and secured to interior pages. Corners are cut square and sharp with

ever-so-slight blunting permitted. A 1/16"-1/8" bend is permitted with no color break. No creases. Small, inconspicuous, lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable as long as they are in an unobtrusive location. No soiling, staining or other discoloration apart from slight foxing. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples may show some discoloration. No staple tears are allowed; almost no stress lines. No rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is cream to off-white, supple and fresh. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is secure. Slight interior tears are allowed.

9.0 **VERY FINE/NEAR MINT (VF/NM):** Nearly perfect with outstanding eye appeal. A limited number of bindery defects are allowed. Almost flat cover with almost imperceptible wear. Inks are bright with slightly diminished reflectivity. An 1/8" bend is allowed if color is not broken. Corners are cut square and sharp with ever-so-slight blunting permitted but no creases. Several lightly penciled, stamped or inked arrival dates are acceptable. No obvious soiling, staining or other discoloration, except for very minor foxing. Spine is tight and flat. No spine roll or split allowed. Staples may show some discoloration. Only the slightest staple tears are allowed. A very minor accumulation of stress lines may be present if they are nearly imperceptible. No rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is cream to off-white and supple. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is secure. Very minor interior tears may be present.

8.5 **VERY FINE+ (VF+):** Fits the criteria for Very Fine but with an additional virtue or small accumulation of virtues that improves the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

8.0 **VERY FINE (VF):** An excellent copy with outstanding eye appeal. Sharp, bright and clean with supple pages. A comic book in this grade has the appearance of having been carefully handled. A limited accumulation of minor bindery defects is allowed. Cover is relatively flat with minimal surface wear beginning to show, possibly including some minute wear at corners. Inks are generally bright with moderate to high reflectivity. A 1/4" crease is acceptable if color is not broken. Stamped or inked arrival dates may be present. No obvious soiling, staining or other discoloration, except for minor foxing. Spine is almost flat with no roll. Possible minor color break allowed. Staples may show some discoloration. Very slight staple tears and a few almost very minor to minor stress lines may be present. No rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is tan to cream and supple. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is mostly secure. Minor interior tears at the margin may be present.

7.5 **VERY FINE– (VF–):** Fits the criteria for Very Fine but with an additional defect or small accumulation of defects that detracts from the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

7.0 **FINE/VERY FINE (FN/VF):** An above-average copy that shows minor wear but is still relatively flat and clean with outstanding eye appeal. A small accumulation of minor bindery defects is allowed. Minor cover wear beginning to show with interior yellowing or tanning allowed, possibly including minor creases. Corners may be blunted or abraded. Inks are generally bright with a moderate reduction in reflectivity. Stamped or inked arrival dates may be present. No obvious soiling, staining or other discoloration, except for minor foxing. The slightest spine roll may be present, as well as a possible moderate color break. Staples may show some discoloration. Slight staple tears and a slight accumulation of light stress lines may be present. Slight rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is tan to cream, but not brown. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Centerfold is mostly secure. Minor interior tears at the margin may be present.

6.5 **FINE+ (FN+):** Fits the criteria for Fine but with an additional virtue or small accumulation of virtues that improves the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

GRADING DEFINITIONS

6.0 **FINE (FN):** An above-average copy that shows minor wear but is still relatively flat and clean with no significant creasing or other serious defects. Eye appeal is somewhat reduced because of slight surface wear and the accumulation of small defects, especially on the spine and edges. A FINE condition comic book appears to have been read a few times and has been handled with moderate care. Some accumulation of minor bindery defects is allowed. Minor cover wear apparent, with minor to moderate creases. Inks show a major reduction in reflectivity. Blunted or abraded corners are more common, as is minor staining, soiling, discoloration, and/or foxing. Stamped or inked arrival dates may be present. A minor spine roll is allowed. There can also be a 1/4" spine split or severe color break. Staples show minor discoloration. Minor staple tears and an accumulation of stress lines may be present, as well as minor rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is brown to tan and fairly supple with no signs of brittleness. No hint of acidity in the odor of the newsprint. Minor interior tears at the margin may be present. Centerfold may be loose but not detached.

5.5 **FINE– (FN–):** Fits the criteria for Fine but with an additional defect or small accumulation of defects that detracts from the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

5.0 **VERY GOOD/FINE (VG/FN):** An above-average but well-used comic book. A comic in this grade shows some moderate wear; eye appeal is somewhat reduced because of the accumulation of defects. Still a desirable copy that has been handled with some care. An accumulation of bindery defects is allowed. Minor to moderate cover wear apparent, with minor to moderate creases and/or dimples. Inks have major to extreme reduction in reflectivity. Blunted or abraded corners are increasingly common, as is minor to moderate staining, discoloration, and/or foxing. Stamped or inked arrival dates may be present. A minor to moderate spine roll is allowed. A spine split of up to 1/2" may be present. Staples show minor discoloration. A slight accumulation of minor staple tears and an accumulation of minor stress lines may also be present, as well as minor rust migration. In rare cases, a comic was not stapled at the bindery and therefore has a missing staple; this is not considered a defect. Any staple can be replaced on books up to Fine, but only vintage staples can be used on books from Very Fine to Near Mint. Mint books must have original staples. Paper is brown to tan with no signs of brittleness. May have the faintest trace of an acidic odor. Centerfold may be loose but not detached. Minor tears may also be present.

4.5 **VERY GOOD+ (VG+):** Fits the criteria for Very Good but with an additional virtue or small accumulation of virtues that improves the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

4.0 **VERY GOOD (VG):** The average used comic book. A comic in this grade shows some significant moderate wear, but still has not accumulated enough total defects to reduce eye appeal to the point that it is not a desirable copy. Cover shows moderate to significant wear, and may be loose but not completely detached. Moderate to extreme reduction in reflectivity. Can have an accumulation of creases or dimples. Corners may be blunted or abraded. Store stamps, name stamps, arrival dates, initials, etc. have no effect on this grade. Some discoloration, fading, foxing, and even minor soiling is allowed. As much as a 1/4" triangle can be missing out of the corner or edge; a missing 1/8" square is also acceptable. Only minor unobtrusive tape and other amateur repair allowed on otherwise high grade copies. Moderate spine roll may be present and/or a 1" spine split. Staples discolored. Minor to moderate staple tears and stress lines may be present, as well as some rust migration. Paper is brown but not brittle. A minor acidic odor can be detectable. Minor to moderate tears may be present. Centerfold may be loose or detached at one staple.

3.5 **VERY GOOD– (VG–):** Fits the criteria for Very Good but with an additional defect or small accumulation of defects that detracts from the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

3.0 **GOOD/VERY GOOD (GD/VG):** A used comic book showing some substantial wear. Cover shows significant wear, and may be loose or even detached at one staple. Cover reflectivity is very low. Can have a book-length crease and/or dimples. Corners may be blunted or even rounded. Discoloration, fading, foxing, and even minor to moderate soiling is allowed. A triangle from 1/4" to 1/2" can be missing out of the corner or edge; a missing 1/8" to 1/4" square is also acceptable. Tape and other amateur repair may be present. Moderate spine roll likely. May have a spine split of anywhere from 1" to 1-1/2". Staples may be rusted or replaced. Minor to moderate staple tears and moderate stress lines may

be present, as well as some rust migration. Paper is brown but not brittle. Centerfold may be loose or detached at one staple. Minor to moderate interior tears may be present.

2.5 **GOOD+ (GD+):** Fits the criteria for Good but with an additional virtue or small accumulation of virtues that improves the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

2.0 **GOOD (GD):** Shows substantial wear; often considered a "reading copy." Cover shows significant wear and may even be detached. Cover reflectivity is low and in some cases completely absent. Book-length creases and dimples may be present. Rounded corners are more common. Moderate soiling, staining, discoloration and foxing may be present. The largest piece allowed missing from the front or back cover is usually a 1/2" triangle or a 1/4" square, although some Silver Age books such as 1960s Marvels have had the price corner box clipped from the top left front cover and may be considered Good if they would otherwise have graded higher. Tape and other forms of amateur repair are common in Silver Age and older books. Spine roll is likely. May have up to a 2" spine split. Staples may be degraded, replaced or missing. Moderate staple tears and stress lines may be present, as well as rust migration. Paper is brown but not brittle. Centerfold may be loose or detached. Moderate interior tears may be present.

1.8 **GOOD– (GD–):** Fits the criteria for Good but with an additional defect or small accumulation of defects that detracts from the book's appearance by a perceptible amount.

1.5 **FAIR/GOOD (FR/GD):** A comic showing substantial to heavy wear. A copy in this grade still has all pages and covers, although there may be pieces missing. Books in this grade are commonly creased, scuffed, abraded, soiled, and possibly unattractive, but still generally readable. Cover shows considerable wear and may be detached. Nearly no reflectivity to no reflectivity remaining. Store stamp, name stamp, arrival date and initials are permitted. Book-length creases, tears and folds may be present. Rounded corners are increasingly common. Soiling, staining, discoloration and foxing is generally present. Up to 1/10 of the back cover may be missing. Tape and other forms of amateur repair are increasingly common in Silver Age and older books. Spine roll is common. May have a spine split between 2" and 2/3 the length of the book. Staples may be degraded, replaced or missing. Staple tears and stress lines are common, as well as rust migration. Paper is brown and may show brittleness around the edges. Acidic odor may be present. Centerfold may be loose or detached. Interior tears are common.

1.0 **FAIR (FR):** A copy in this grade shows heavy wear. Some collectors consider this the lowest collectible grade because comic books in lesser condition are usually incomplete and/or brittle. Comics in this grade are usually soiled, faded, ragged and possibly unattractive. This is the last grade in which a comic remains generally readable. Cover may be detached, and inks have lost all reflectivity. Creases, tears and/or folds are prevalent. Corners are commonly rounded or absent. Soiling and staining is present. Books in this condition generally have all pages and most of the covers, although there may be up to 1/4 of the front cover missing or no back cover, but not both. Tape and other forms of amateur repair are more common. Spine roll is more common; spine split can extend up to 2/3 the length of the book. Staples may be missing or show rust and discoloration. An accumulation of staple tears and stress lines may be present, as well as rust migration. Paper is brown and may show brittleness around the edges but not in the central portion of the pages. Acidic odor may be present. Accumulation of interior tears. Chunks may be missing. The centerfold may be missing if readability is generally preserved (although there may be difficulty). Coupons may be cut.

0.5 **POOR (PR):** Most comic books in this grade have been sufficiently degraded to the point where there is little or no collector value; they are easily identified by a complete absence of eye appeal. Comics in this grade are brittle almost to the point of turning to dust with a touch, and are usually incomplete. Extreme cover fading may render the cover almost indiscernible. May have extremely severe stains, mildew or heavy cover abrasion to the point that some cover inks are indistinct/absent. Covers may be detached with large chunks missing. Can have extremely ragged edges and extensive creasing. Corners are rounded or virtually absent. Covers may have been defaced with paints, varnishes, glues, oil, indelible markers or dyes, and may have suffered heavy water damage. Can also have extensive amateur repairs such as laminated covers. Extreme spine roll present; can have extremely ragged spines or a complete, book-length split. Staples can be missing or show extreme rust and discoloration. Extensive staple tears and stress lines may be present, as well as extreme rust migration. Paper exhibits moderate to severe brittleness (where the comic book literally falls apart when examined). Extreme acidic odor may be present. Extensive interior tears. Multiple pages, including the centerfold, may be missing that affect readability. Coupons may be cut.

PRESERVATION AND STORAGE

There are a number of powerful foes waiting to strike at collectors, not least of which are the comic books themselves, or rather the effects of time on them.

Comics, after all, were not manufactured for the long haul. They were built to last just a short time, made with acidic newsprint paper, thin covers, and inconsistent inks. They weren't originally made with bags and boards, long boxes, Mylar snugs or CGC slabs. They were created, as painful as this is for a true collector to think about, to be disposable.

Is there any way to combat the ravages of time on your comics? Yes! We might not be able to keep comics in Gem Mint condition forever, but we can slow the damage with good methods of preservation and storage.

Some of the best advice for preserving a comic is simply to handle it carefully. Most dealers would prefer to remove the comic from its bag and show it to the customer themselves. In this way, if the book is damaged, it would be the dealer's responsibility and not the customer's.

When handling high-grade comics, always wash and dry your hands first, eliminating harmful oils from the skin. Lay the comic on a flat surface or in the palm of your hand and slowly turn the pages. This will minimize the stress to the staples and spine.

Careful storage is also a key element in the preservation of a cherished comic book. They must be protected from the elements, including the dangers of light, heat, and humidity. In addition to thinking about where you store your comics, you should also consider what you store them in. For years there have been arguments about what materials are acceptable.

For many years, it has been the policy of *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* that in the *short term*, under good conditions, most plastic bags and boards are acceptable. It is vital to remember that it is up to you as a collector to find out what materials are used to make your collector supplies and to understand that when combined with negative conditions, particularly heat and humidity, the safe lifespan of bags that might otherwise be fine in the short term is quickly decreased.

For long term preservation, only archivally sound materials should be used. Generally speaking, this means Mylar snugs and acid-free backing boards, but there are numerous variations on these subjects. The time you spend learning about these materials, though, will be time you don't have to spend later wondering what happened to your collection.

Even when it comes to boxes, care must be taken. Some contain chemicals that will actually help to destroy your collection rather than save it. Always be aware whether you are purchasing materials designed for long-term storage or not.

You can read more about these subjects in *The Official Overstreet Grading Guide*, available at local comic shops.

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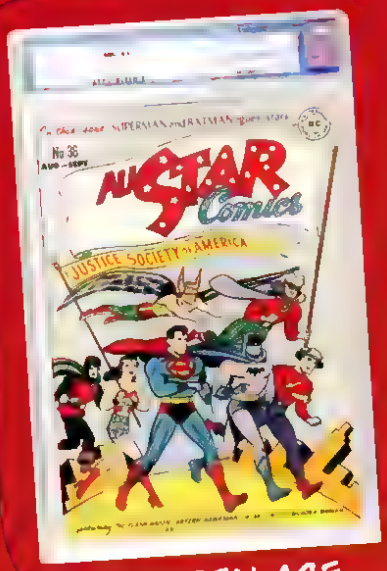

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COMIC BOOK CONVENTIONS

Comic book conventions are a great way to meet fellow fans, creators, publishers, dealers and others who share your passion for your favorite titles, characters and events. Conventions range from small, one-day events on the local level all the way up to Comic-Con International: San Diego and the New York Comic-Con, the two biggest comic book events in North America.

Below is a list of just some of the shows on the con circuit, but be sure to check your area regularly. You never know when a comic con might pop up!

MegaCon
February 17-19, 2012
Orange County Convention Center, Center Hall D,
9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819
www.megaconvention.com

Anaheim Comic Con
Anaheim Convention Center
800 West Katella Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92802
www.wizardworld.com

Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo (C2E2)
McCormick Place
2301 S. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60616
www.C2E2.com

Pittsburgh Comicon
Monroeville Convention Center
209 Mall Boulevard
Monroeville, PA 15146
www.Pittsburghcomicon.com

Toronto Comic-Con
Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place
100 Princes' Blvd, Toronto, ON, M6K 3C3 Canada
www.wizardworld.com

Virginia Comicon
June 11, September 3 and October 29, 2011
Ramada Plaza West
6624 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23230
www.vacomicon.com

WonderCon
Moscone Center South,
747 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.comic-con.org/wc

HeroesCon
June 3-5, 2011
Charlotte Convention Center
501 S. College Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
www.heroesonline.com

Wizard World Philadelphia
June 17-19, 2011
Pennsylvania Convention Center
1101 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
www.wizardworld.com

Comic-Con International: San Diego
July 21-24, 2011 (Preview Night July 20)
San Diego Convention Center
111 W. Harbor Drive
San Diego, CA 92102
www.comic-con.org

Chicago Comic-Con
August 11-14, 2011
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center
5555 N. River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018
www.wizardworld.com

Baltimore Comic-Con
August 20-21, 2011
Baltimore Convention Center
One West Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
http://baltimorecomiccon.com/

Canadian National Fan Expo
August 26-28, 2011
Metro Toronto Convention Centre
222 Bremner Blvd.
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3L9
www.fanexpocanada.com

Small Press Expo (SPX)
September 10-11, 2011
Bethesda North Marriott Hotel
& Conference Center
5701 Marinelli Road,
N. Bethesda, MD 20852
www.spxpo.com

Big Apple Comic-Con
September 24-25, 2011
Penn Plaza Pavilion
401 Seventh Ave. @ 33rd St.
New York, NY 10001-2062
www.wizardworld.com

New York Comic Con
October 13-16, 2011
Jacob K. Javits Center
11th Avenue (between 34th and 39th Streets)
New York, NY 10001
www.NewYorkComicCon.com

Alternative Press Expo (APE)
October 1-2, 2011
The Concourse
635 8th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.comic-con.org/ape

Long Beach Comic Con
October 29-30, 2011
Long Beach Convention Center
300 East Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802
www.LongBeachComicCon.com

Mid-Ohio Con
October 22-23, 2011
Greater Columbus Convention Center
Exhibit Hall E
400 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
www.midohiocon.blogspot.com/

Austin Comic Con
November 11-13, 2011
Austin Convention Center
500 East Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, Texas 78701
www.wizardworld.com

New Jersey Comic-Con
New Jersey Convention and
Exposition Center
97 Sunfield Avenue
Edison, NJ 08837
www.wizardworld.com

Collecting Dead Universes

Tower. VALIANT. Continuity. Eclipse. CrossGen. Triumphant. Milestone. DEFIANT. DC's Impact! line. Dark Horse's Comics Greatest World. Marvel's New Universe. Archie's Red Circle line. Deluxe Comics. Broadway Comics. Atlas-Seaboard.

For years it seemed like the collectors of these and numerous other "Dead Universes" were isolated in the loneliest outposts of comicdom. The development of internet communities, such as VALIANTfans.com, though have swelled the ranks and given encouragement to those who not only collect the comics of bygone publishers or imprints, but who document every aspect possible.

Such fans often discover, scan and post previously forgotten advertisements, posters and other promotional items. They track down creators and editors and get inside information. They find rare variant covers and misprints.

And yet they dwell in a world of incomplete stories, tales which very often will never have an ending. What makes them do it?

After a long break from comics, Chris Scott stumbled upon a copy of the X-O Manowar trade paperback from VALIANT in a local comic shop. Remembering how much he had enjoyed the series and other material from the publisher, he picked it up and read it in one sitting.

"This started me on a quest to find all of the VALIANT Comics that I used to read. Eventually, I would own and read every book that VALIANT published from its beginning to its end. This was truly my first Dead Universe collection of comics. Once I had the VALIANT set completed, I realized that I really liked the writing of Jim Shooter and his work in the early days of VALIANT. This led me to collect his other works, namely DEFIANT and Broadway Comics," Scott said.

"This started me on the road to collecting comics that were no longer in print or their signature universe had died many years ago. I went on to collect Continuity, Malibu, Malibu's Ultraverse, Bravura, Marvel's New Universe, Impact!, CrossGen, Tekno, Event, Eclipse, Red Circle, Triumphant, Marvel's 2099, Virgin, Majestic, Future, Milestone, Atlas-Seaboard, Dagger, Tower and a few other universes," he said.

"I find the Dead Universe to be appealing for many reasons. The stories are fun to read. The number of issues in any said universe are finite. In many cases, the stories were left unfinished (a sad instance of this was the CrossGen universe). Trying to put these runs together is sometimes incredibly easy to do, which leads to another aspect of Dead Universe books in that the common issues are very inexpensive," he said.

On the other hand, he pointed out, there are some issues which are very hard to find, such as variant covers, premium comics and promotional or one-of-a-kind items.

Collector Robert McGinity echoed the appeal of the low cost average issues, but warned there can be a more serious commitment needed for some of the tougher ones.

"Sometimes I will have to buy 20 books just to get one that I want. That leads to storage issues, but it's nothing the occasional garage sale doesn't fix," McGinty said.

But it is, after all, supposed to be about the fun, getting some level of personal interest or satisfaction out of the activity.

"I think the enjoyment of collecting Dead Universes is the same for me as for most of the other collectors. It's a finite number of books to collect, you don't have to pay the high prices of new comics to collect them, and there are lots of great premium books that were tough to get back when they came out, but which now can often be found in bargain bins," said collector Joe Piechota. "We're also always finding new items that are not widely known."

And since we're talking about comics, where "dead" frequently doesn't have the meaning it does in the real world, not all Dead Universes stay that way.

Many of the Milestone characters such as Static and Xombi have come back at DC, as has Tower's *T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents*. The Gold Key and VALIANT titles *Magnus, Robot Fighter*, *Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom* and *Turok, Son of Stone* have been revived by Dark Horse Comics (joined by Gold Key's *Mighty Samson*). Several of the Atlas-Seaboard titles from 1975, including *Phoenix* and *The Grim Ghost*, have seen recent rebirths at Ardden Entertainment. Marvel has revisited their New Universe. Dynamite revived Event's *Painkiller Jane*.

And no doubt others will follow…

Collecting By Character:

Elric of Melniboné

While characters like Superman or Spider-Man reside with their original publishers, many characters from the Golden Age and many others from the creator-owned era have been produced under numerous imprints. This can make collecting all the appearances of a specific character a worthy challenge.

Few characters have had a diverse a comic book publishing history as Michael Moorcock's sword-and-sorcery fantasy anti-hero Elric. Like Conan, in whose title his first comic book appearance came, Elric was first introduced in the world of prose fiction (writer Roy Thomas, who has long been associated with both characters, was the driving force in getting both into the four color world).

Elric was a manifestation of Moorcock's "Eternal Champion," who at other times would be embodied by his characters Hawkmoon, Corum, Jerry Cornelius and numerous others, walking between the forces of order and chaos.

Notable runs for the character have come at Pacific Comics, First Comics, Topps Comics, Dark Horse Comics, and DC Comics. Elric was most recently announced as a new series from BOOM! Studios.

Conan The Barbarian #14-15
Marvel Comics; 1972

Elric #1
Windy City Publications; 1973

The Jewel in the Skull
Big O Publishing; 1978
(UK graphic novel, first Hawkmoon)

Marvel Graphic Novel #2: Elric: The Dreaming City
Marvel Comics; 1982

Elric of Melnibone #1-6
Pacific Comics; April 1983 - April 1984

Elric: The Sailor on the Seas of Fate #1-7
First Comics; June 1985 - June 1986

First Comics Graphic Novel #6 - Elric of Melnibone
First Comics; May 1986
Signed & Numbered HC by Graphitti Designs

Elric: Weird of the White Wolf #1-5
First Comics; October 1986 - June 1987

First Comics Graphic Novel #11: Elric: The Sailor on the Seas of Fate
First Comics; August 1987
Signed & Numbered HC by Graphitti Designs

Elric: The Vanishing Tower #1-6
First Comics; August 1987 - June 1988

Elric: The Bane of the Black Sword #1-6
First Comics; August 1988 - June 1989

First Comics Graphic Novel #21: Elric: Weird of the White Wolf
First Comics; September 1990
Signed & Numbered HC by Graphitti Designs

Elric #0
Topps Comics; 1996

Elric: Stormbringer #1-7
Dark Horse Comics/Topps Comics; 1997

Michael Moorcock's Multiverse #1-12
DC Comics/Helix; November 1997 - October 1998

Michael Moorcock's Multiverse
DC Comics/Vertigo; 1999

Michael Moorcock's Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer #1-4
DC Comics; 2004 - 2006
TPB *2007*

Hawkmoon and Corum were also featured in mini-series from First Comics.

Collecting By Character:

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER

One of the many ways to collect is following a specific character or group of characters. Collecting high profile creations such as Spider-Man, Batman, Superman, The X-Men or many others will keep a reader busy since they have multiple new titles and many older ones as well. While other characters might have a slightly lower profile, the task can still remain a worthy challenge, particularly when one is dedicated to getting everything associated with the character and not just the comic books themselves.

With a name like Magnus, it might seem automatic for collector Magnus Ramström to be interested in Magnus, Robot Fighter. It didn't start out that way, though. Like many Europeans, he first started with a healthy love of the Disney Ducks. In fact, he didn't even become familiar with Russ Manning's creation until he was on this side of the pond.

That late start, however, didn't stop him from becoming in the opinion of many other collectors the top collector of the character in the world.

"Here in Sweden it was kind of obvious, almost taken for granted, that kids read Donald Duck and/or the Swedish comic *Bamse, the World's Strongest Bear*. My parents got me a subscription to Donald earlier than I can remember, and I still enjoy the duck stories. When I started school, me and my friends turned to superhero comics. At that time four DC comics were reprinted in Swedish. I read them all and later some Marvels. The books with teams were my early favorites (Legion of Super-Heroes and Justice League of America); later Spider-Man became more popular," Ramström said.

Then, in 1994 after moving the States, he happened to see a comic shop.

"I could not resist it and found lots of comics reminding me of my youth. I also found back issues of VALIANT's Magnus. That was a huge discovery for me and it was just the beginning. I still had Gold Key's Magnus to discover as well as the rest of the VALIANT universe (and basically all about how comics had developed in the decade I had missed). Especially [Jim] Shooter's writing impressed me so much that I wanted to learn more," he said.

After acquiring the VALIANT run of the character, he expanded and sought out the original Gold Key series. Since neither is a particularly long run, once that mission was completed, he turned to other VALIANT titles, then DEFIANT and other Gold Key series, international editions and more.

"Most important is that my habits have grown to represent how comics are created and the community of creators and fans," he said. He also expanded into Magnus-related original comic book art.

"Pencils, inks, colors, panel pages, splashes, covers, card art, published, unpublished, commissions and so on, preferably representing every aspect of the creation process that I have learned to admire so much," he said.

His collection includes some original Gold Key covers, covers and interiors from key VALIANT issues, concept pieces, private commissions and more, enough to make another fan green with envy. That said, neither these pieces nor the comics are what he thinks is best about collecting. What is?

"The community! To get in contact with people having the same tastes as me and to be part of discussions on forums and over email. Sometimes of course discussions can get rough, as even creators have experienced, but often, so much more often, one experiences how people help and care for each other," Ramström said. And the creators. I have had such good times talking, emailing and even meeting with creators. That's just so cool beyond words."

Collector Magnus Ramström with Frank Bolle's unpublished cover for Gold Key's *Magnus Robot Fighter* #47. In addition to the older material, he's also collecting the new Magnus series from Dark Horse.

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BAILEY'S BLURBS

New to comics? So is Bailey Ball. She is a graduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County studying Public History and is currently writing her Masters thesis on American and British national identity as displayed through Holocaust museum exhibits. Bailey worked for Geppi's Entertainment Museum as Educational and Special Programming Associate from 2008-2010, where she got a heavy duty dose of comics, and she continues to be a huge fan of popular culture and pop culture studies. Here's her take on two "Must Read" graphic novels.

The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck: Volume 1

By Don Rosa
128 Pages; $24.99 hardcover
BOOM! Studios

The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck: Volume 1 is the first of two volumes in which Don Rosa gives us a glimpse into the early life of Uncle Scrooge. This volume contains the first six of a twelve part series where, in an introduction writer-artist Rosa says he dug through the classic stories of Scrooge's creator, Carl Barks, to unearth every detail that Barks had ever unveiled, no matter how minute.

He admits that this version of Scrooge's life is not the official version, but rather his own personal telling. However, he did try to make it as detailed and accurate to the original Barks character as possible. Rosa assembles these facts into a timeline broken down into twelve logical segments, each dealing with one period of Scrooge's life. Each adventure ends with a commentary by Rosa and a section entitled "Insane Details to Look For," which offers readers the fun challenge of taking a second look at each section to pick up some amusing details.

This collection is a great way to escape for an afternoon into the light-hearted humor, and surprisingly mature character development, of Rosa's Scrooge In the introduction, Rosa declares that his intention for this series was not to change the universe of Scrooge McDuck, but rather to reaffirm all of the elements of the Scrooge stories that fans love and enjoy.

Sgt. Rock: The Lost Battalion

By Billy Tucci
160 Pages; $24.99 HC, $17.99 SC
DC Comics

As a graduate student studying World War II, I may have had a slight bias toward *Sgt. Rock: The Lost Battalion* by Billy Tucci. Nevertheless, I think that all readers who pick up this book will lose themselves in this engrossing, action-packed account of camaraderie amid the horrors of World War II combat.

The Lost Battalion begins with an introduction by retired Lt. Erwin Blonder, who was contacted by Tucci about his experiences with the 141st Battalion while he was developing this comic book. If this introduction doesn't suck you in and make you want to read more, you may want to check and make sure that you still have a pulse

The Lost Battalion tells the tale of the 141st Battalion, of which Blonder served as the Artillery Forward Observer with the only radio that was able to contact the 36th Division, part of the 7th Army that landed in Southern France.

Each tale includes individual stories, riveting accounts, and vivid, meticulous artwork. This book does an incredible job of depicting the strength and determination of the soldiers on the battlefields of World War II; real-life heroes who showed courage in the face of what, at times, appeared to be a lost cause and certain defeat.

The Lost Battalion is inspired by true events and the result of weeks of traveling to the sites of combat these soldiers would have seen and interviews with numerous retired members of the 141st and 442nd combat regiments. Tucci's thorough research helps contribute a unique perspective of the European theater amid what seems to be countless other accounts of World War II. His hard work shines through in a well-crafted story that blends a modernized approach to a classic comic character with historical accuracy.

This book is a fast-paced war story that many readers will find difficult to put down and a great opportunity to help provoke interest in World War II among younger generations. I can only hope that *The Lost Battalion* will encourage the trend of depicting important episodes of history in comics and graphic novels.

Look for Bailey's Blurbs online every two weeks in Scoop!

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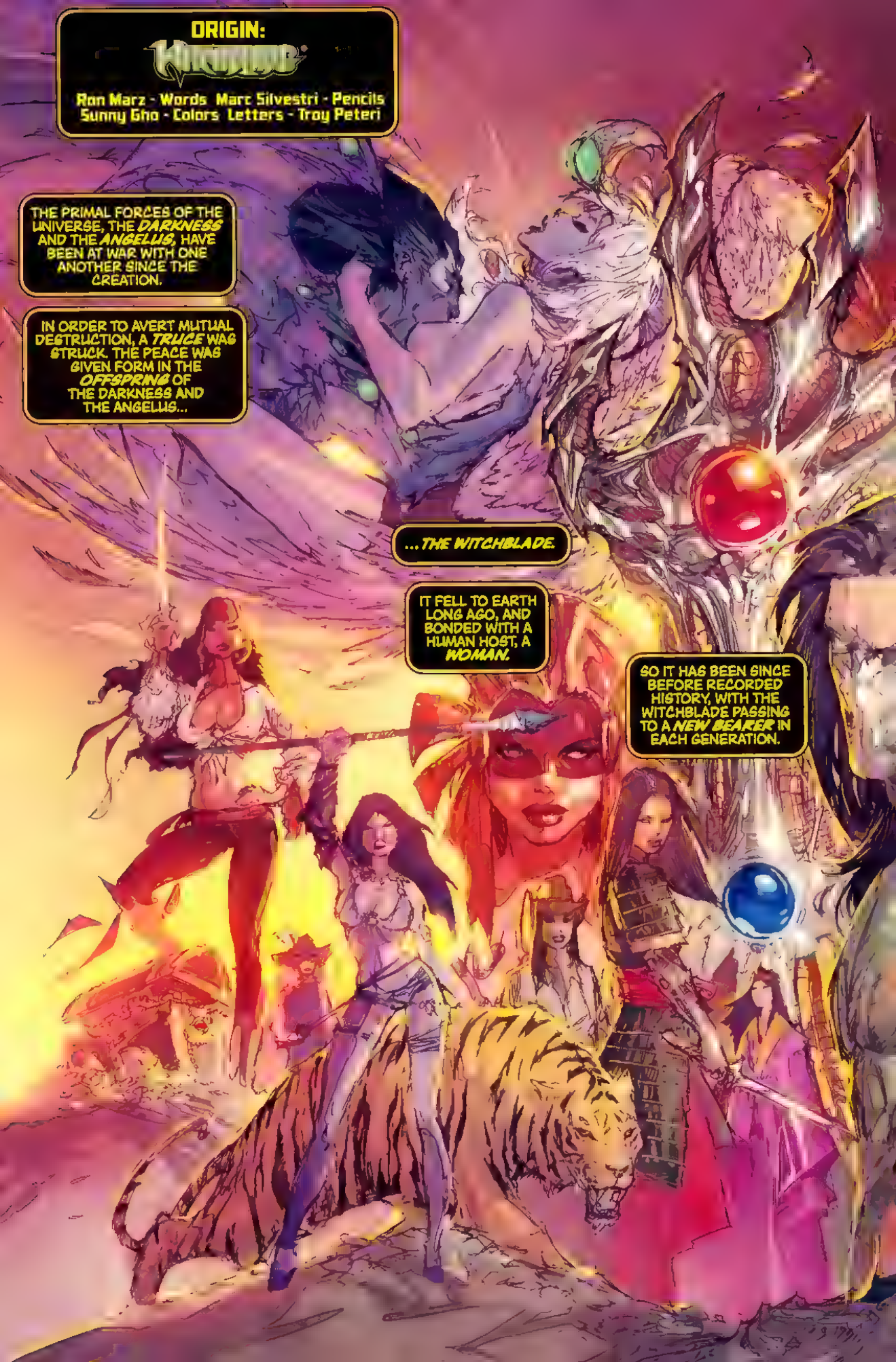
ORIGIN:
Ron Marz - Words Marc Silvestri - Pencils
Sunny Gho - Colors Letters - Troy Peteri
THE PRIMAL FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE, THE DARKNESS AND THE ANGELUS, HAVE BEEN AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER SINCE THE CREATION.
IN ORDER TO AVERT MUTUAL DESTRUCTION, A TRUCE WAS STRUCK. THE PEACE WAS GIVEN FORM IN THE OFFSPRING OF THE DARKNESS AND THE ANGELUS...
...THE WITCHBLADE.
IT FELL TO EARTH LONG AGO, AND BONDED WITH A HUMAN HOST, A WOMAN.
SO IT HAS BEEN SINCE BEFORE RECORDED HISTORY, WITH THE WITCHBLADE PASSING TO A NEW BEARER IN EACH GENERATION.

THE SENTIENT WITCHBLADE RESPONDS TO THE BEARER'S WILL, AS WELL AS ATTEMPTING TO IMPOSE ITS *OWN* WILL.
CAPABLE OF TAKING A MYRIAD OF FORMS, IT CAN CREATE STURDY ARMOR AND POWERFUL WEAPONS.
THE CURRENT BEARER IS NYPD DETECTIVE *SARA PEZZINI*, WHO FIRST ENCOUNTERED AND BONDED WITH THE WITCHBLADE DURING AN UNDERCOVER OPERATION.
NOW SARA MUST *BALANCE* HER DETECTIVE CAREER AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WITCHBLADE...
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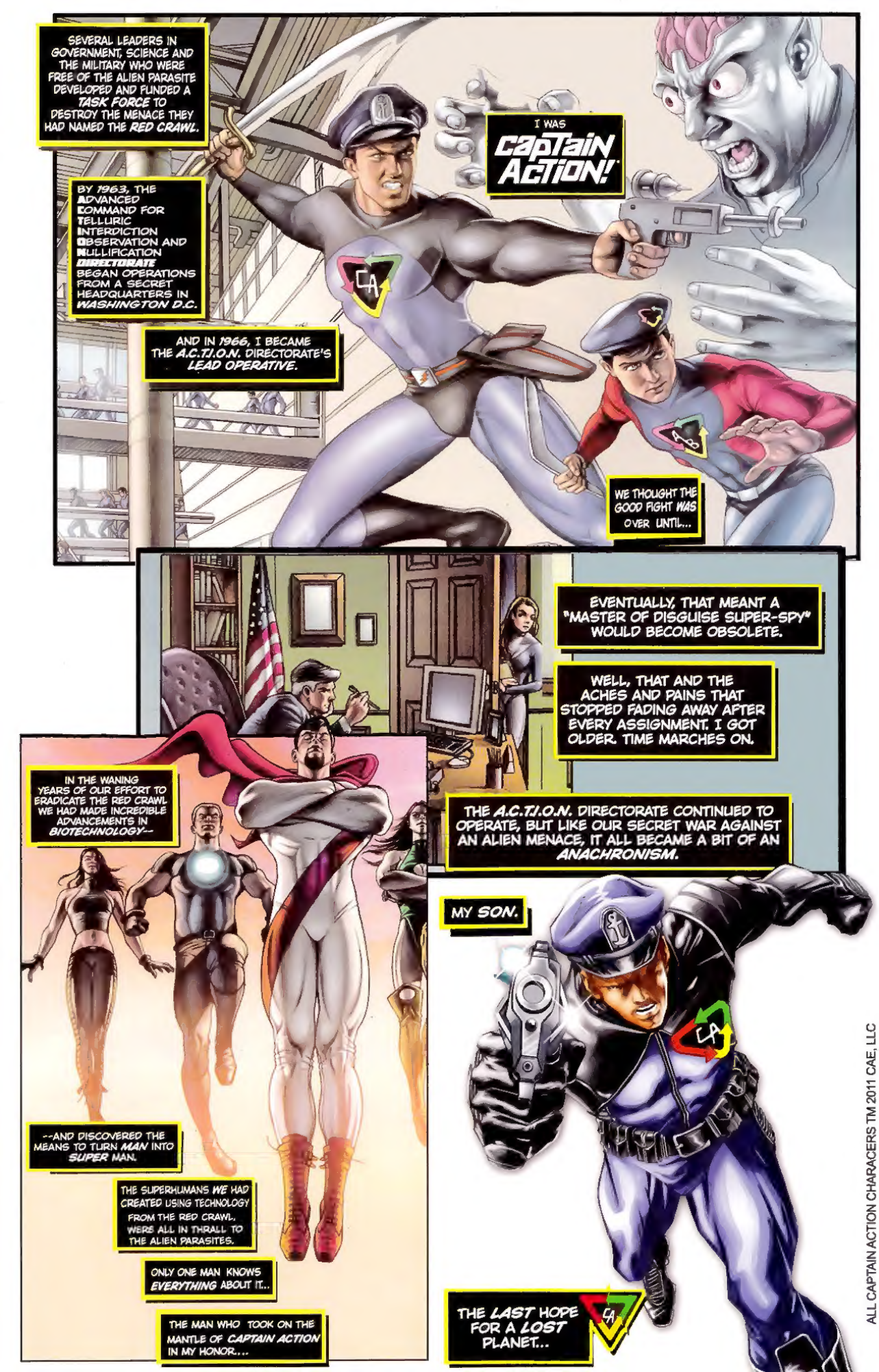
SEVERAL LEADERS IN GOVERNMENT, SCIENCE AND THE MILITARY WHO WERE FREE OF THE ALIEN PARASITE DEVELOPED AND FUNDED A TASK FORCE TO DESTROY THE MENACE THEY HAD NAMED THE RED CRAWL.
I WAS CAPTAIN ACTION!
BY 1963, THE ADVANCED COMMAND FOR TELLURIC INTERDICTION OBSERVATION AND NULLIFICATION DIRECTORATE BEGAN OPERATIONS FROM A SECRET HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON D.C.
AND IN 1966, I BECAME THE A.C.T.I.O.N. DIRECTORATE'S LEAD OPERATIVE.
WE THOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT WAS OVER UNTIL...
EVENTUALLY, THAT MEANT A "MASTER OF DISGUISE SUPER-SPY" WOULD BECOME OBSOLETE.
WELL, THAT AND THE ACHES AND PAINS THAT STOPPED FADING AWAY AFTER EVERY ASSIGNMENT. I GOT OLDER. TIME MARCHES ON.
THE A.C.T.I.O.N. DIRECTORATE CONTINUED TO OPERATE, BUT LIKE OUR SECRET WAR AGAINST AN ALIEN MENACE, IT ALL BECAME A BIT OF AN ANACHRONISM.
IN THE WANING YEARS OF OUR EFFORT TO ERADICATE THE RED CRAWL WE HAD MADE INCREDIBLE ADVANCEMENTS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY--
--AND DISCOVERED THE MEANS TO TURN MAN INTO SUPER MAN.
THE SUPERHUMANS WE HAD CREATED USING TECHNOLOGY FROM THE RED CRAWL, WERE ALL IN THRALL TO THE ALIEN PARASITES.
ONLY ONE MAN KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT IT...
THE MAN WHO TOOK ON THE MANTLE OF CAPTAIN ACTION IN MY HONOR....
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